

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Install stories

David Robinson tries to migrate all his applications from his old notebook to a new one before he's engulfed by the tidal wave of discarded CDs cluttering up his office

I really must stop doing wheelies past the stands at Donington in SuperBike Challenge and concentrate on moving everything from the Sony Vaio to the Toshiba (see *Under Development*, *Shopper* October 2007). If I don't, I'll never have everything working before I go to France, and I don't want to drag two notebooks along with me.

This is the point at which your past sins catch up with you. Some of my favourite software came on CD and some from the internet, so the first task is to find it all. For CDs I use a crude method of storing anything important in one big box. It's better than having multiple 'safe' places, some of which are so safe that you can't remember where they are. I just have to rummage through the hundreds of discs until I find the ones I want, hoping that Keef hasn't 'borrowed' them. Somehow, the combination of a software CD, Keef and borrowing never seems to involve the verb 'return'. Mrs R asks why I don't file them in alphabetical order. Simple – I'm a man. And even if I did organise them, Keef's style of searching would soon randomise them again, so why bother?

SEARCH PARTY

The list of what I'm looking for includes Serif Page Plus, Web Plus and Photo Plus; Microsoft Visio and Microsoft Office; Palm stuff for interacting with the PDA; Timex stuff for loading data from the GPS watch; Edirol drivers for MIDI and USB recording interfaces; and CASL and Borland Delphi compilers.

Miraculously I found them all, which is more than can be said for the downloaded stuff. This should be in the Downloads folder on the Vaio. If I was getting short of disk space I'd archive downloads to CD or DVD – two copies, just in case – which means more box-rummaging.

Even more elusive are the registration keys that unlock the downloaded software and make it run properly. Those have definitely disappeared into the place that's so safe I can't remember where it is.

The two that cause me the most grief are Borland's Turbo Delphi, which is absolutely essential, and a



utility called Capture By George, which is a cheap but good screen capture program that's very useful when preparing program documentation. Delphi installed OK but, although I used the 'key' that Borland sent me, insisted that it was the free evaluation version and not the professional one I paid for. The big difference with the evaluation version is that you can't install extra components to use in your programs, and our work depends heavily on Keef's super-intelligent and productivity-enhancing component set, which I can't get at.

Referring to Borland's website I found that:

- 1 To get help or register a product you have to have a username and password.
- 2 The site says my username and password are invalid.
- 3 It won't let me re-register (which includes having to supply your email address) because it says that email address is already being used by another user – ie, me with the password it says is invalid.

Programmers call this recursion. My computer dictionary entry for 'recursion' says "see recursion" ☺.

A call to Borland's UK office eventually solved the problem, via a help desk manned by a German working in Belgium (I think – you can never really tell who's what or where these days). Re-registering the software finally unlocked it.

TRIAL AND ERROR

No such luck with Capture By George, though. I found the original

registration key, but entering it in the appropriate box didn't do the magic unlock trick, and all my screen grabs have a whopping "TRIAL VERSION" emblazoned across them in big red letters. A number of emails to the program's author failed to produce any response. Typical – no sooner do I find that I haven't, after all, wasted £20 on the SuperBike game and the £20 I spent on Capture By George goes down the drain.

Visio installed OK, which was a relief – it's the best program I know for doing flow diagrams and network schematics. Unfortunately, it had gone completely doolally on the Vaio and all attempts to reinstall it met with the 'not enough disk space' problem. Office also appeared to install OK, and I can use Word and Excel to create and edit documents. However, whenever anyone sends me an Office file as an email attachment, instead of opening the document I get a message asking me to install Office and put the CD/DVD in the drive.

Where's the CD? Dunno – Keef's borrowed it. Where's Keef? Having the week off to move house. Argh!

VERSION THERAPY

Serif also found a way to make the day more interesting. Having reinstalled Web Plus, I needed to do some updates to www.draxon.co.uk. The latest version of Web Plus is 10. The latest version of the site was created with Web Plus 10. When I tried to load the site to edit

it, I got a message saying: "This program can load files created with Web Plus versions 8 and 9. The file you are loading appears to have been created with version 10." Shouting "You are bloody version ten!" at the screen doesn't work, so I call tech support, who suggest downloading the latest version from their web link. This I do. The silly message goes away.

Having worked through each challenge, I now have a machine I can work with. Wanting to transfer just a few more files over, I went to start up the Vaio and... zilch. Dead as a dodo. A multimeter applied to the power supply read 19 volts DC coming out, which was correct. Substituting another Sony power supply with the same ratings failed to get a better result. I ordered another battery (for £63!), but that did no better. Looks as if I made the move just in time.

Anyway, getting at the data wasn't a problem – the hard disk is accessible through a small flap in the base of the case, so I whipped it out and popped it into a USB external housing, which cost nine quid plus VAT from www.cpc.co.uk. But it just goes to show that you can't assume your computer will live forever, and you must always back up anything irreplaceable.

I don't know what to do with the old Vaio. I'd like to get it going again to use as a dedicated controller for a DMX network for manipulating intelligent stage lights. I'm writing a book on the subject, so I need to experiment. Recently I received Scott Mueller's *Upgrading and Repairing Laptops* for review. Perhaps there's some useful advice in there (I've no time to look now because there's too much to do as the holiday deadline looms). The book's yet another of Mueller's monster tomes, so I'll have to see if I can find space for it when I pack the car. Perhaps it'll fit between the Tosh, Mrs R's three kitchen sinks and her 14 pairs of shoes. ☺

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